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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 627

By Mumpower

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of longtime Democratic activist and former State Representative Gwen Phillips Fleming of Bristol.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the death of Mrs. Gwen Phillips Fleming of Bristol, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, born on July 16, 1911 in Dorchester County, Maryland, the daughter of Edward S. and Mary V. Phillips, Gwen Phillips Fleming was educated in Cambridge, Maryland and graduated from Pierce College in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; she did her graduate studies at Johns Hopkins University, the University of Pennsylvania, and at the New School of Social Research in New York, New York; and

WHEREAS, after moving to Bristol with her husband, John Fleming, in 1947, Mrs. Fleming began her political involvement the following year. She was a Charter Member and the former President of the Sullivan County Democratic Women, and served in the congressional campaigns of Senator Estes Kefauver in 1948, 1954, and 1960, and served on the state Democrat Executive Committee from 1962-66; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Fleming was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for her fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, during her two terms in the State House of Representatives, from 1971 through 1975, Representative Fleming was one of three women from Sullivan County elected to the State legislature. While in office as the representative from House District 1, she served as Vice-Chairwoman of the legislative committee that helped override a gubernatorial veto and establish the medical school at East Tennessee State University; and

WHEREAS, she served during her tenure as Secretary of the House Democratic Caucus, as a member of the Finance, Ways, and Means Committee, General Welfare Committee, Fiscal Review Committee, and as Vice-Chair of the Legislative Negotiating Committee. She sponsored and/or supported legislation for "Equal pay for equal jobs, the federal Equal Rights Amendment, the Roe-Wade Decision, the Tennessee Cultural Arts Center, mental health and education bills, East Tennessee Medical School at Johnson City, and the Commission on Status of Women"; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Fleming had the honor of serving on the Electoral College and attending the Democratic National Convention four times. She attended the Convention in 1964 and again in 1980 for former President Jimmy Carter, and served as a delegate in 1992 and 1996 for former President Bill Clinton; and

WHEREAS, Representative Fleming lent her valuable expertise in the matters of public policy as her genuine concern for the general welfare of the citizens of this State was evident in her participation on the following State Boards and Commissions in which she served: the Tennessee Board of Trustees for Mental Health and Mental Retardation, the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, the Tennessee Court of the Judiciary, Eastern State Psychiatric Hospital Advisory Board, East Tennessee League of Women Voters and the Tennessee Bicentennial Commission; and

WHEREAS, in 1974, she received a commendation from the Tennessee General Assembly for her diligence and effectiveness in championing medical education; in 1979, the Tennessee Commission on the Status of Women honored her for her outstanding efforts in promoting opportunities for women; and

WHEREAS, Representative Fleming was a valuable member of her local United Way; she also served on the Bristol Regional Rehabilitation Board, the Bristol Mental Health Board, the Bristol Parent Teacher Association Council, and the American Heart Association; and

WHEREAS, she is credited with helping establish the first juvenile court in Bristol and later served as an advisor to that court; and

WHEREAS, professionally, Mrs. Fleming served as a vocational advisor for the United States Veterans' Administration during World War II, where she headed the Vocational Rehabilitation Unit for severely disabled veterans of the war; she later served as a personnel director for the Friez Division of Bendix Aviation Corporation; and

WHEREAS, during World War II, she served as a member of the Women's Division for Industry, the Maryland Council of Defense, and as a member of the Womanpower Committee of the War Manpower Commission; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Fleming was an active and devout member of the Emmanuel Episcopal Church, which she served faithfully for many years as President of the Women of the Church and as Chairwoman of St. Elizabeth's Guild; she served as a member of the Altar Guild and the Church vestry and worked the Church Bazaar; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Fleming was also deeply devoted to her family, and she always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Gwen Fleming enjoyed the loving companionship of her devoted husband of 54 years, John M. Fleming, and was the proud parent of Ann Fleming McLendon and Gwendolyn Fleming Scaff; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Fleming leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we honor the memory of former State Representative Gwen Phillips Fleming, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character and her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we express our deepest sympathy and offer our condolences to the family and friends of Mrs. Fleming as we convey our gratitude for her bountiful life of purpose.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.